2: Fulop

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/For information on the mythological origins of manioc, tobacco and coca as related in Tucano folk-tales, see category 539 or category 116, pp. 34-41./

/100 cont./

241 Just as the cutting and burning of the forest undergrowth
462 from land intended for agriculture is the exclusive work of the men, the planting, the care of the garden, and the harvesting
• [249] are tasks done solely and exclusively by the women. A man would be considered diminished in his masculinity by the rest of the society if he devoted himself to these tasks. The only exception in this case is the cultivation of coca and tobacco, in which the man is the one who does all the work, from the planting and care to the harvesting and processing.

241 Although bitter yuca is the most important crop among the Tukano Indians, they also have plantings of pineapple, papaya, plantains, flame (3),

3. Dioscorea Lindmanii Uline.

[439] maize, sugar cane, coca, tobacco, /101/ and lemons. The
[437] pineapple, the papaya, and the plantain are products utilized principally in the barter with the rubber workers for articles such as salt, cigarettes, matches, ammunition, flashlight batteries, soap, etc.

224 Hunting, in the Tukano culture, fills the important function
[262] of providing the members of the community with meat in the alimentation. Before the arrival of the rubber workers along the
224 Vaupés, the hunting of mammals was done by means of the bow
223 and arrow, while birds were hunted with darts shot by means of a
[177] blowgun, the points of which had been bathed in curare. At present, the shotgun, obtained through work in the rubber plantations, has replaced the bow and arrow. For the hunting of small birds, the poisoned dart and the blowgun are still being used.

224 Hunting is done during the night, and generally it is done individually. In hunting the animal is not hunted and pursued through the forest, but awaited at the water holes on the shores of the rivers and streams. The native who goes after game remains in his canoe and uses his lantern both to distinguish the animal by the color of his eyes and to blind it momentarily and thus have

/174 cont./

361 And, in order to avoid the annual floods, they locate themselves on more elevated points or "terra-firme" and are never seen in palafittes (6).

6. In some posts on the Colombian frontier, called "Comissaria," a residence for the customs officials and the guards is built on an elevated point, on posts about two meters from the ground, approximately. In 1952 an Indian from the Brazilian bank of the Papurí imitated this style in building his hut. In jest the others called it "comissaria."

351 In the povoados of two or more houses, or behind the single maloca, there will always be a beaten area that separates them, by about 50 or 100 meters, from the forest and guards against attacks by ferocious animals.

241 They regularly plant in the vicinity the pimenteira (different varieties of cápsicum), pupunha, assai, urucum, and, with less frequency, the cucura /Pourouma cecropiaefolia, Mart./, lemon tree (today also the orange tree), mamoeiro (papaya cárica), abio (lucúma caimíta, Roem. e Schulth.), /175/ sugar cane (sáccharum officinale, Lin.), tobacco (nicotiana tabácum), and coca (erythróxilon coca).

• 249 415 *[192] Often one sees a small press, ã'rɨ̃ arõãrõ (Uaupés a'nã anyãnõ), for sugar cane (7).

7. In a maloca of the Tuyuka, on the headwaters of the Tiquié, the press was found inside the maloca, in the vicinity of the main door.

They are generally four vertical posts, well planted in the ground, supporting two wooden cylinders provided with longitudinal grooves and which turn in opposite directions, pressing the cane between

/175 cont./

• 249 415 them. Although this is not a plant native to Brazil (8),

8. This is commonly thought. The cane has an Asiatic origin from China, from where it passed to the Mediterranean, and from Spain to the New World. The year of 1627 is marked as being the one of its introduction in Pará. It is certain that at the time of the discoveries the Indians were already planting cane. Alonso de Rojas, in the report on the journey of Pedro de Teixeira in 1637, tells us this ("Descobrimento do Rio das Amazonas," p. 114).

Nordenskiöld thinks that the press is a native invention, according to his material and resources. Nordenskiöld's opinion does not seem acceptable to us for the presses and the tribes of the Uaupés. [177] They would be an imitation of the presses that the civilized have used on the lower Rio Negro since the eighteenth century.

351 A square, maxkã-pá, or rectangular area, cleaned of any *[192] vegetation, and usually proportional to the population, is located in front of the maloca. It is also called baxsarí-u'tú, "dance yard"; actually some numbers of the ceremonial dances are performed there.

351 There is always a road a few meters wide, and clean, that 504 leads to the landing place, or places, where they tie the canoes and take their bath. A road that serves, moreover, for the procession of Wãx-tí at his festival (cf. VII - 4, e (2)).

504 When the steep bank of the river is very high, they build a stairway with steps of earth or of timbers. If the steps are of earth, they are made immovable with roundish timbers of about two meters, tied to small stakes driven into the ground or tied transversely, by means of cipos, to two long lateral parallel beams.

/233 cont./

372 Formerly fire was obtained by turning rapidly between the palms of the hands a small stick whose end was provided with a match of kapok, and rubbing it in the small orifice of another [192] small stick that was very dry. The apparatus is called pexkâ-mẽ wihyasé in Tukano.

262 The diet of these natives, although at first sight it does not seem so, is quite varied, rich in vitamins of vegetable and animal origin. As for the salts necessary to the organism, they get them from roots and fruits; as a matter of fact, they have a strong bone structure, and nevertheless the waters show a deficiency of [273] calcareous salts. As for sugar, they only have that of the fruits [249] and of the fermentation of their drinks. The cultivation of sugar cane is insignificant and intended practically for the preparation of the caxirís, although once in a while some Indian will be seen sucking it.

The amount of food that the Indian consumes daily is large, when he has plenty of it; although on other days, due to a lack of food, he is forced into a very strict fast. Perhaps the caxirí itself, which he drinks in large portions on the occasion of feasts, plays the role of a periodic washing of the stomach, intestines, and kidneys. It is certain that thin persons are rarely found among them, if one excludes the older women, who generally are so, and the sick. They are, on the contrary, plump in figure or even fat, without obesity or deforming adiposities, strong and healthy.

It is to be noted that the Indian emits a characteristic smell, which makes us think that it is due to a diet predominantly of fish and pepper.

/234/ 5) Hunting and fishing.

a) Fishing.

226 Fish is an important element in the diet of the Indians, as we have already seen. In the regimen of the family home, each [462] family head provides the fish; it is his habitual, although not exclusive, occupation. In the regimen of the collective dwelling

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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244 will lack food, but that she will lack a role in chicha preparation and
423 be deprived of trade goods. Her fear is for loss of status.

[261] The *chagra*, to summarize, is a well-defined item of property. It is
[602] the domain of a particular woman, in the sense of economics, in the
[558] sense of status, and, as mentioned earlier, as a kind of sanctuary. No other land in the community has this character of particularity. All other cultivations, including pupunha orchards, belong to the cultivator, but the land on which they are grown has no standing as personal property. Whereas the manioc gardens of a household have contiguity, to the point where a son clears a plot for his wife adjacent to that of his mother, the variety of its other cultivations are scattered over the entire settlement.

241 With respect to all secondary crops, there is also very clear recog-
423 nition of ownership. Each planting has its known owner, who may be a man, a woman, or a child. Ownership rights are scrupulously
[622] respected, and no one would consider disturbing another's plantings without permission. Tobacco, coca, and *mihi* are generally grown for
[431] the community by the headman, but are recognized, nevertheless, as his plantings. He also contributes to the community all of his pupunha harvest. But it is precisely because he contributes to the
[183] community that his ownership is clearly acknowledged. The point,
[430] of course, about Cubeo property relations is that generosity and sharing go along with the assertion of individual rights. The privilege of the individual as a *giver* is thereby respected. The least formal
249 sharing involves sugar cane. It is understood that everyone is entitled
423 to the simple refreshment of a freshly cut stalk of cane. Even so,
431 adults who do not have cane of their own prefer an invitation. Children, on the other hand, do not stand on ceremony. Yet even a very young tot who is cutting a stalk does so with the announcement, "I am now cutting the cane of my older brother," or whatever the kinship connection may be.

226 On the river, the masculine domain, the men have staked out sites
423 for placing weirs and fish traps. The setting of weirs is the one ter-
614 ritorial issue that disturbs the harmony between sibs along a river. Weirs are commonly set in a *caño*, in which case they are a purely intrasib matter. If, however, men block the main stream they are obligated to allow fish to pass through periodically. "Sometimes they
[578] forget," I was told, "and then we go and tell them. But if they are mean then we go at night and break up their weirs." Such disputes
423 are not common. Within the sib the issue is not of weir rights but of
226 specialization in fishing methods. A man develops a preference for weir fishing, he troubles to prepare the cumbersome equipment and

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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saw them serve chicha in this manner. The Cubeo offer the calabash with a jest: "Drink quickly so that you may be drunk soon." The aim of the drinking party is to achieve an intense state of excitement and to maintain that until overcome by sheer fatigue and sleep. 574 Tobacco, coca, and *mihí* supplement drinking to intensify and 273 hasten the reaction. When *mihí* is taken, producing color visions and 276 finally a blackout, the Indians say, "Now we shall get drunk quickly." [825] *Mihí* is associated with *miwa* (birds), which are the patrons of ecstatic intoxication.[1] Drunkenness is not to be avoided. If a little boy gets drunk his father is proud of his precociousness. Women, however, are not expected to get drunk and they rarely do.

574 *Mihí* is not taken at every drinking party but only at those that 276 are considered very important. At the mourning festival (*óyne*) a great quantity is consumed. The narcotic plants (*Banisteriopsis* [249] *caapi* and others) from which *mihí* is prepared are cultivated by the [171] men only and they alone drink it. The Cubeo regard it as a sacred drug, and from all indications it is so regarded throughout the Western Amazon region where it is used. Along the Orinoco the Indians chew the skin, but all along the Vaupés an infusion is prepared by boiling the leaves, bark, and roots to form a greenish-brown "soup" that is strongly bitter. The Cubeo prepare several varieties that are graded according to potency. Upon truly solemn occasions they begin with a mild infusion from the leaf of a variety that is taken exactly at midday, and conclude with a very strong variety just before sunset. This sequence of *mihí* transports a man from vague and mild visions of whiteness to intense hallucinatory experiences, bursts of violence, and finally loss of consciousness. *Mihí* almost invariably causes vomiting, and for that reason alone each man must take many servings. For each type of *mihí* there are four servings taken from a small gourd dipper. The first service is of two dippers, the second of one, and the third and fourth of two each. At the beginning, the Indians say, the vision becomes blurred, things begin to look white, and one begins to lose the faculty of speech. The white vision turns to red. One Indian described it as a room spinning with red feathers. This passes and one begins to see people in the bright coloring of the jaguar. When the final strong forms of *mihí* are taken the hallucinations begin to assume a disturbing and fearful form. One becomes aware of violent people milling about, shouting, weeping, threatening to kill. One is seized with the fear that he no longer has a home. The house posts and trees come alive and take the form of people.

[1] There is also a bird called *mihíkó*.

721 many more people lived there. We are told by Robuchon that sixty years ago the Indians of north-west Amazonia, round the Caquetá and to the north, were extremely warlike. Tribal warfare was rife and no one trusted his
727 neighbour. *Malocas* were attacked and burnt down and prisoners taken; of these only young children were allowed to survive as slaves. The remainder were knocked to the ground with wooden clubs which the Indians still have today, their bodies hacked to pieces, their forearms used to stir the *chicha* and the armbones later made into flutes. Hands and feet were a delicacy and the sexual organs were eaten by the headman's wife to ensure brave offspring. even the bones were boiled into broth and the orgy continued until the cannibals had completed their spoil and the *chicha* had run dry.

Such a description of warfare and cannibalism would not fit the Indian who lives in the Piraparaná today, and certainly bears no resemblance to the
[178] daily life we saw in their *malocas*. We found the Indian's day measured by a peaceful regularity.

512 Slowly the great house comes to life. Smouldering fires are stirred into a blaze, for the hour before sunrise – even inside the *maloca* – is always the coldest. A baby cries, a young Indian moves from his hammock to the palm-screen door and eases it up to its hook like a portcullis, then saunters leisurely out into the dawn. Others follow. The women move at the far end of the *maloca*, still only vague shapes in the gathering light as they prepare cassava, pick up the water pots and go down to the river to bathe.

[264] The men returning from the river squat on their haunches on the low
[262] stools in the centre of the *maloca*, and without any ceremony consume their breakfast of cassava bread, manioc juice and probably some leftovers from the previous night – boiled fish or a piece of bush pig. The women, who have eaten separately with the children, collect their large manioc baskets and leave
[482] for the *chagra*, the forest clearing where they grow their crops. The baskets are slung from a strip of sapling bark across the forehead; they hold their babies on their hips, walking rapidly, almost awkwardly – the Indian
[855] woman's gait is not a graceful one. Children run along beside them, some
[857] affectionately holding the hands of their mothers, others playing. A few of the elder children return to the river to fish, and some of the men go off in
[226] pairs to hunt and fish, while others move off to collect coca leaves from their *chagras*.

249 The Piraparaná has always been an area of coca cultivation and today the river and its tributaries are one of the few remaining strongholds of the drug in north-west Amazonia. Carrying no more than their small coca pouches and the basket for the leaves, five or six men, led by the headman, go down to the stream, perhaps taking a drink and washing themselves before they climb up the far bank. They move along a path through the thick vegetation of an old *chagra* fallen into disuse. Although an occasional banana or *pupuña* palm

6: Moser and Tayler E,N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

survives, the cultivated plants have been strangled by weeds and secondary growth. 249

The *cacique*, the *maloca*'s pet bird, accompanies the Indians, flying from bush to bush and cawing raucously as she glides low over their heads, her olive-green breast almost brushing their hair. She perches on a charred tree-stump, looks at them as they leave the old *chagra* and enter the forest, gives a loud 'caw' and flies back to the *maloca* to see what edible scraps can be found. [136]

In the early morning the tall forest is dank and cool, a place of silence broken only by the occasional chatter of the Indians as they move rapidly along, their sure footsteps delicately gliding over the mass of roots which forms a base to the pathway. Few birds and no animals are about; the sun's rays piercing through the thick leaf vault give life to what might be a dead world. Suddenly they come to a wide expanse of cleared land. There is a chaotic mass of fallen trees, black from recent fires, surrounded by the forest wall. It is as if a great explosion had occurred leaving behind only the charred remains.

Every year or two, when the dry season comes in late November or December, the men cut down an area of forest, and about two months later, just before the rains return, they burn the fallen timber to make a new *chagra*. With each new *chagra*, the men, who do all the clearing and burning, move further afield, so that eventually, after some five years or more, the *maloca* too will be moved to be near the plantation. 241 462

This system of shifting agriculture, the men as it were preparing the ground for the women to work on, is carried on incessantly. Partly owing to soil exhaustion, partly because of weed strangulation, the areas of cultivation must be constantly changed, and so the moving Indian population covers wide areas of otherwise untouched Amazonian forest. 241 221

It is now January; the smell of the fire still clings to this battlefield of black charcoal. Soon, with the arrival of the rains in March, the women will plant out the manioc cuttings and by late October the first crop will be harvested; so for two years they may expect to get reasonable manioc yields from their *chagra*, after which they must move again. 241 462

The men run over the fallen tree-trunks and from the new *chagra* they move into an area partly overgrown by weeds and secondary growth. Here, placed almost mathematically across the *chagra*, in contrast to the haphazard cultivation of other plants, are the avenues of coca shrubs. 249 462

Perhaps the ritual associated with the taking of cocaine during festivals and tribal ceremonies, apart from its daily use, explains the attention given not only to its later preparation but also to the planting and picking of the leaves. The common coca shrub, always tended by the men, stands about five feet high when fully grown and may last five or more years. It is the most important of the stimulants taken by the Tukano, some of whom are heroic addicts taking as much as two ounces a day. Their life is partly geared to their addiction, and their daily practice is to come to the *chagra* and

6: Moser and Tayler E.N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

249 462 spend the greater part of the morning collecting the leaves which they prepare during the afternoon and evening. It is a serious task and one which each man undertakes with a strange air of concentration. Each coca plant is selectively stripped leaf by leaf before the next one is tackled. The headman carries the basket with him and gradually it fills with handfuls of pale sage-green leaves. The younger men collect the leaves almost reverently in their right hands before emptying them into the basket, their faces serious, their crouched bodies shining in the strong morning sun, their short, clipped speech broken occasionally by a high-pitched laugh.

512 244 462 85 In the distance small ribbons of smoke rise in a misty cloud. The women are just visible, their squat figures crouching among the manioc plants. They can be heard laughing; occasionally a baby cries and the children romp and play among the bright-green manioc plants whose tall spindly branches stretch skywards some six feet, terminating in clusters of long, thin, starlike leaves. With their babies straddled across their backs the women spend the morning cutting out the long potato-like roots from the sandy soil and putting the waste foliage into piles to be burnt. It is hot with the sun streaming down, the fires crackling and the smoke enshrouding the working bodies. There is little time for rest, though a woman will stop to swing her child around and let it suckle her breast; a mother may give a fat yellow beetle grub to her child to eat, having detached the head – a great delicacy, tasting like butter. Soon large baskets are filled with roughly peeled and half-cleaned roots.

512 [482] The sun is high overhead and the men leave for the *maloca* with their basket full of coca leaves; on top they place large dried leaves from the *yarumo* (Cecropia) trees which grow like weeds in the *chagra*. The women too load their heavy baskets on to their backs, the headbands taking the greater part [222] of the fifty-pound weight. The whole group hurries through the forest in silence, passing the old *chagra* where the headman's wife leaves the other women to collect pineapples, then down to the stream beneath the *maloca*. At this point comes one of the noisiest and most amusing incidents in their [515] daily life. Not only the manioc roots are washed in the water but the babies [85] too; the mothers vigorously shake their large baskets of roots, then stop to splash water over the backs of the children. For a short time there is cacophony, with screaming babies, splashing water, continuous chatter and laughter, and even barking dogs. But soon the stream is left to myriads of white and brimstone-yellow butterflies which circle everlastingly over the sandbanks, and the women, refreshed, their long black hair glistening in the sun, return up the path to the *maloca*.

Tobacco plants are nearly always grown in a little patch directly in front

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A graceful Tukano canoe.

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[see p. 66-A]

6: Moser and Tayler E.N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

of the men's entrance. Boys carefully pick the tobacco leaves one by one and lay them out on cane matting to dry. An Indian sits in the shade of the *maloca's* overhanging eaves and starts to make string from strands of tough *cumare*. His graceful movements as he rolls the fibre with the palm of the hand on his shining thigh, the string looped around his right big toe, are like those used in the making of Venetian glass. An older man sits near by, deeply engrossed in the construction of a large, shallow cassava basket, a maze of cane strips almost hiding his wizened face.

The women file through their entrance, their great loads of manioc white and clean after their river washing. They pause for a moment or two and eat some cassava or the pineapples and wild fruit which they have just brought back, but soon they are working again, pulverizing the manioc on the shield-shaped wooden grating boards which have minute flints or tough palm spines set into their baked-clay surface. They work as a team, some grating, others washing the manioc in vast basket-sieves slung between wooden tripods, while yet others extract the poisonous prussic acid by placing the grated manioc flour in a snake-like *matapí*, a long squeezer of plaited cane. With the upper end looped over a pole, a woman stretches its mesh by sitting on a second pole placed in the lower loop. The *matapí* contracts and the poisonous juice runs out.

When the flour from the *matapí* is ready it is placed on the large flat ovens to make rough cassava pancakes, the Amazonian daily bread, which they eat at every meal together with fish and meat brought back from the forest. The starch from the washed manioc is also baked to make wafer-thin toasted biscuits to add to the *chicha*. Some of the flour is spread thinly on another oven to make the nutty grounds of *farinha*, and the liquid from the washing and squeezing is boiled to neutralize the poison, then poured into the long canoe-trough to make *chicha*.

The noise of grating and the creaking of the tripods lasts all afternoon. A girl feeds her pet parrot some insects, then, taking a strand of *cumare* and winding it around her toe, she starts plaiting string for a hammock to replace her old one. Squatting on the ground, an old woman kneads clay and wood ash. She rolls the clay mixture into coils on a flat board and between the palms of her hands. Then she places them coil upon coil about a clay base, smooths the clay with a pebble and leaves the completed pot in the shade of the *maloca*. Later it will be put on a fire and surrounded with wood bark and ash to bake. Occasionally we saw an iron pot, which at some time in the past must have been traded up the rivers from the Caquetá or the Vaupés. These were sufficiently few to be highly treasured and hadn't affected their own

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ABOVE: *The shaped but unfinished canoe is dragged down to the river.* BELOW: *Then it is warped open over a fire.*

6: Moser and Tayler E,N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

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648 That evening the conversation turned to rubber, the exploitation of the Indians and the atrocities. There had been two booms in the area. The first died out with the end of the First World War and the increased production in Malaya. Then with the Japanese occupation of South-East Asia during the Second World War, attention again switched to the Amazon and this continued into the fifties. Now only small interests remain and although the Indians are well paid and housed, the old fear of the *caucheros* is still there and many prefer to live their own lives.

Carlos told us that he had sixteen Indians working for him. Most of them only worked during the summer months – from November to March – when the forest was drier. If there was rain the latex from the wild rubber could not be collected. During the winter months the Indians returned to their homes to attend to their *chagras*. The men cut traces through the forest at fifty-yard intervals within easy shouting distance of one another, so that none of the trees are missed. Each morning they place small wooden cups beneath a fresh slash in the bark, returning later to empty the latex into rubber bags slung on their backs. A different section of the forest is covered each day until the cycle is completed and they start again. When the rubber is brought back to the house formic acid is added, though any organic acid can be used, even lemon juice. This coagulates the rubber which is then rolled into sheets, some of which Carlos showed us hanging from the roof-beams of his house.

At the end of a season's gathering the rubber is shipped in bales up the Caquetá to Araracuara. From there it is flown to the merchants in Bogotá – usually in May and June – and Carlos added, 'This is about the only time in the year when I see civilization. To save costs we arrange that the plane brings all our supplies and merchandise for the next year on its inward journey. These are mainly for the Indians, for there is nothing he can buy with money here, so I keep a small trade store.'

ooo Later Carlos spoke of the Missing Link or Loys' Ape, which he maintained lived in the area. Three years before, one of his young workers was out in his rubber trace when he was suddenly attacked by a beast, which held him fastened to the ground all night. The boy who had fainted from fear, was found the next day and brought to Carlos's house where he took forty-eight hours to recover. He was thoroughly washed but the foul smell of the beast was impossible to remove. Several rubber gatherers claim to have seen the ape in the area of the Miritiparaná. Something very similar has also been reported from the Llanos, in the wooded river valleys near the Orinoco.

539 Stories of the half-human ape are as common as those of lost cities, the Amazonian women and the tribes of white Indians who hunt by night. All occur in the myth and legends of the tribes. But to hear a first-hand account of this ape-man from a reliable witness was unusual.

114 Before dawn we set off down river in Carlos's long, narrow, shallow-draught Caquetá boat, faster and more graceful than the stouter ones of the